

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 16560

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR JA KS KN

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR SNEIDER CONVERSATIONS ON KOREAN ISSUES

1. SUMMARY: DURING CALLS ON FONOFF OFFICIALS AND DEP PM FUKUDA, AMBASSADOR SNEIDER, VISITING FROM SEOUL, ENCOURAGED JAPANESE TO HELP ROK LEADERS REGAIN CONFIDENCE IN ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS. FONOFF OFFICIALS SAID POLICY SUPPORTING ROK REMAINS UNCHANGED WITH ADVENT OF MIKI CABINET. THERE WAS AGREEMENT ON HOLDING MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE BUT TIMING UNCERTAIN. THEY EXPRESSED HOPE, HOWEVER, FOR GESTURE FROM ROK, ESPECIALLY RELEASE OF TWO IMPRISONED JAPANESE, TO START RELATIONS TOWARD IMPROVEMENT. BUSINESS INTERESTS ARE WAITING FOR POLITICAL SIGNAL, PARTICULARLY MINISTERIAL MEETING, BEFORE EXPANDING ACTIVITIES IN ROK. POLICY TOWARD NORTH KOREA ALSO IS UNCHANGED AND GOJ WILL CONTINUE TO EXPAND NON-POLITICAL EXCHANGE BUT NOT RECOGNIZE DPRK. AMBASSADOR NISHIYAMA, FROM CANADA, WILL REPLACE USHIROKU IN SEOUL IN FEBRUARY OR EARLY MARCH. INDICATING HE HELD POSITION OF CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE IN NEW CABINET, FUKUDA PROMISED EFFORTS TO HELP ROK AND IMPROVE ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING DECEMBER 16 CALLS BY VISITING AMBASSADOR SNEIDER FROM SEOUL ON FONOFF OFFICIALS, VICE FONMIN TOGO, DEP FONMIN ARITA, AND DIRGEN ASIAN BUREAU TAKASHIMA, BOTH SIDES ENGAGED
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IN CANDID DISCUSSION OF KOREAN ISSUES AND JAPAN'S RELATIONS WITH

KOREAS. DISCUSSING KOREAN POLICY OF MIKI CABINET, ARITA SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHERE BALANCE BETWEEN POSITIONS AMONG VARIOUS MEMBERS OF CABINET WOULD BE FOUND. ARITA NOTED THAT LDP VP SHINA HAD PLAYED GREAT ROLE IN DEVISING MIKI CABINET. SHINA IS SYMPATHETIC TO ROK, AS ARE DEP PREMIER FUKUDA AND LDP BOARD CHAIRMAN NADAO. ARITA SAID FRANKLY HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT MIKI'S OR MIYAZAWA'S ATTITUDES WERE BUT SPECULATED THAT MIKI MIGHT FAVOR DEVELOPING TIES WITH NK SOMEWHAT FASTER THAN PREVIOUS GOJ.

3. NEVERTHELESS, ARITA EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO BASIC CHANGE IN POLICY TOWARD ROK. WHILE TRYING TO INCREASE CULTURAL AND TRADE TIES WITH NK, GOJ WOULD NOT EXTEND (DIPLOMATIC) RECOGNITION TO DPRK. IN THIS CONTEXT ARITA NOTED THAT THERE WERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOJ AND USG ATTITUDES REGARDING EX-IM CREDITS TO NK. GOJ HAS NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT NK AND WOULD PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY. ARITA SAID GOJ NOW UNDERSTANDS ROKG AND USG POSITIONS. NEGOTIATIONS FOR CURRENTLY ENVISAGED PROJECTS BEGAN LONG AGO AND THUS DECISION COULD NOT BE REVERSED. AS RESULT OF ROK AND US DEMARCHES, GOJ WILL BE MORE CAREFUL IN FUTURE. FONOFF WOULD HAVE TO MONITOR MITT'S ACTIVITIES IN THIS AREA MORE CLOSELY. EACH PROPOSAL WOULD BE DECIDED ON CASE BY CASE BASIS.

4. TOGO, ARITA, AND TAKASHIMA SAID SOME GESTURE ON PART OF ROK WAS NEEDED TO PROVIDE IMPETUS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. ALL THREE MENTIONED ROK'S RELEASE OF TWO JAPANESE YOUTH IMPRISONED IN ROK AS PARTICULARLY HELPFUL FOR UPSWING IN ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS. ARITA, REFERRING TO KIM DAE JUNG CASE, TOTED THAT ROK PM KIM CHONG PIL CAME TO TOKYO LAST DECEMBER AND AGREED TO POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF CASE, INCLUDING PROMISE THAT KIM WOULD BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE ROK. IN ADDITION TO FAILURE TO HONOR THIS AGREEMENT, RELATIONS HAVE BEEN FURTHER AGGRAVATED BY ROK'S FAILURE TO PROVIDE JAPANESE POLICE RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION OF ENTIRE CASE, INCLUDING FORMER FIRST SECRETARY KIM DONG WOON'S ROLE. LATTER FAILURE IS, OF COURSE, MINOR IRRITANT. TOGO CONSIDERED SOME ACTION AGAINST KIM DONG WOON AS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN IMPROVING POLICE COOPERATION. ARITA STATED THAT, IN GENERAL KIM DAE JUNG'S CASE HAS BEEN SET ASIDE BY GOJ. HOWEVER, IMPRISONMENT OF TWO JAPANESE IS A CONFIDENTIAL

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DOMESTIC PROBLEM FOR GOJ. GOJ HAS NOT ASKED ROKG FOR THEIR RELEASE, BUT MANY JAPANESE QUESTION ROK'S COURT PROCEDURES, LACK OF ACCESS TO TWO BEFORE TRIAL, AND SEVERITY OF SENTENCES. HOWEVER, THERE MIGHT BE PROBLEMS IF TWO ARE RETURNED TO TOKYO SINCE THEY MIGHT WELL PUBLICLY RECALL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEIR TRIAL AND TREATMENT TO ROKG'S EMBARRASSMENT. BUT, AGAIN ARITA MUSED, SOME GESTURE ON ROK'S PART WAS NEEDED. AMBASSADOR SNEIDER SAID HE HAD REPORTS ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF RELEASE OF

PRISONERS INCLUDING TWO JAPANESE.

5. DURING DISCUSSION WITH TAKASHIMA, TAKASHIMA NOTED THAT JACK ANDERSON'S REPORT THAT PRESIDENT PARK ADMITTED A KCIA ROLE IN KIM DAE JUNG CASE HAS EMBARRASSED JAPANESE. GOJ HAD TAKEN LINE THERE WAS NO CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE OF KCIA INVOLVEMENT. NOTING THAT KIM DAE JUNG IS NOW RELATIVELY FREE IN KOREA, AMBASSADOR SNEIDER SPECULATED ROKG IS GIVING KIM MORE FREEDOM IN ORDER TO EXACERBATE FRICTIONS IN NDP LEADERSHIP BETWEEN KIM AND KIM YONG SAM. AMBASSADOR SNEIDER EXPRESSED OPINION THAT KIM DAE JUNG MIGHT LIKE TO STAY IN ROK FOR TIME BEING.

6. ARITA FENDED OFF SUGGESTIONS THAT HOLDING MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE WITH ROK WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO GREATER SENSE OF ROK SELF-CONFIDENCE WHICH AMBASSADOR SNEIDER SAID WAS LACKING IN ROK'S RELATIONS WITH US AND JAPANESE "GIANTS." ARITA SAID GOJ WAS QUIETLY TRYING TO EXTEND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO ROK THROUGH TECHNICAL-LEVEL TALKS IN SEOUL THIS WEEK. MINISTERIAL TALKS WERE NOT ESSENTIAL TO SERVE THIS OBJECTIVE. GOJ IS NOT UNSYMPATHETIC BUT, ARITA SAID CANDIDLY, NO ONE WANTED TO GO TO SEOUL NOW. ARITA SAID MINISTERIAL TALKS WOULD TAKE PLACE BUT WAS VAGUE ON EARLY TIMING. TOGO WAS MORE POSITIVE ON NEED TO HOLD TALKS IN NEAR FUTURE.

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01

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7. WITH TAKASHIMA, AMBASSAODR SNEIDER HAD LENGTHY,

LARGELY EDUCATIVE DISCUSSION OF ROK'S LACK OF SELF-CONFIDENCE AND THE MILITARY BALANCE AND DANGERS BETWEEN ROK AND NK. TAKASHIMA SAID, CONFIDENTALLY, THAT GOJ AMBASSADOR TO OTTAWA, AKIRA NISHIYAMA WILL REPLACE AMBASSADOR USHIROKU AS GOJ AMBASSADOR IN SEOUL. USHIROKU WILL BE RECALLED TO TOKYO DECEMBER 25 AND NISHIYAMA WILL GO TO SEOUL IN LATE FEBRUARY OR EARLY MARCH. ON SAME SUBJECT, VICE MIN TOGO WITH SOME EMBARRASSMENT NOTED THAT ROKG HAS NOT YET BEEN INFORMED. JAPANESE CONSUL GENERAL IN SAN FRANCISCO, TOSHIKAZU MAEDA, WHO IS POPULAR WITH KOREANS, ACCORDING TO TAKASHIMA, WILL BECOME MINISTER AT GOJ EMBASSY SEOUL.

8. AT MEETING WITH DEPUTY PREMIER TAKEO FUKUDA, AMBASSADOR SNEIDER WAS TOLD THAT RECENT TURN OF EVENTS WAS MOST UNEXPECTED BUT HIGHLY GRATIFYING SINCE HIS AIM OF RIDDING LDP OF "CORRUPT, MONEY-DOMINATED POLITICS" OF TANAKA LEADERSHIP HAD BEEN ACHIEVED. FUKUDA SAID SHIINA'S SOLUTION WAS ONLY FEASIBLE ONE: FUKUDA COULD NOT HAVE REPLACED TAKAKA HIMSELF WITHOUT SERIOUSLY DISRUPTING PARTY. HE INDICATED HE WAS VERY MUCH IN CONTROL OF IMPORTANT POLICY DECISIONS ALTHOUGH NOMINALLY OCCUPYING SECONDARY POSITION. ON POLICY OF NEW GOVERNMENT TOWARD ROK, FUKUDA BELIEVED GOJ SHOULD TAKE POSITIVE STEPS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. HE SAID SECURITY OF SOUTH KOREA VITAL TO JAPAN'S INTEREST AND AGREED THAT ECONOMIC STABILITY IS CONFIDENTIAL

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KEY TO ROK SECURITY. WHEN AMBASSADOR SNEIDER POINTED OUT SERIOUS CREDIT CRUNCH WAS FACING ROK IN NEXT TWELVE MONTHS, FUKUDA SAID HE RECOGNIZED JAPAN'S STAKE IN KOREA AND INDICATED THAT GOJ UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP WOULD BE PREPARED TO BE HELPFUL IN PROVIDING CREDIT AND ASSISTANCE. HE SAID SOMETHING COULD PROBABLY BE WORKED OUT AT NEXT ROK/JAPAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE WHICH HE INDICATED WOULD DEFINITELY BE HELD IN DUE COURSE.

9. FUKUDA SAID THERE ARE TWO PROBLEMS CURRENTLY STANDING IN WAY OF SMOOTHER ROK/JAPAN RELATIONS: LACK OF SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT OF IDAE JUNG CASE AND IMPRISONMENT OF TWO JAPANESE STUDENTS. HE SAID HE HAD HEARD THROUGH "PRIVATE" CHANNELS LATTER PROBLEM WOULD BE SOLVED SOON WITH RELEASE AND DEPORTATION OF STUDENTS, BUT KIM CASE REMAINED AN IRRITANT THAT HAD TO BE SETTLED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE SINCE IT WAS OBSTACLE TO GOOD RELATIONS. AFTER ASKING FOR AMBASSADOR SNEIDER'S VIEWS, HE APPEARED TO AGREE ULTIMATELY TO SUGGESTION THAT TACTFUL, LOW-KEY APPROACH OVER TIME MAY BE ONLY SOLUTION TO KIM DAE JUNG AFFAIR AND THAT ISSUE SHOULD BE PLAYED DOWN. FUKUDA SAID HE HOPED CLOSE CONTACT BETWEEN US AND JAPAN ON KOREAN MATTERS COULD BE CONTINUED SINCE KOREA OF VITAL INTEREST TO BOTH COUNTRIES.

10. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION SHIMANOUCI AND OTHER KEIDANREN OFFICIALS SAID JAPANESE BUSINESS LEADERSHIP DESIRES TO RESUME PRE-AUGUST 15 RELATIONSHIP WITH KOREA, BUT NEEDED POLITICAL SIGNAL. THEREFORE KEIDANREN IS URGING EARLY MINISTERIAL TALKS, WITH HOPE FOR ROKG GESTURE ON STUDENTS TO TRIGGER GOJ ACTION. ON OTHER HAND, TIGHT CREDIT SITUATION IN JAPAN COULD PROVE GREATER OBSTACLE THAN POLITICAL PROBLEMS TO EXPANDED JAPANESE ASSISTANCE AND CREDITS FOR KOREA IN 1975, DESPITE DIFFICULT ECONOMIC PROBLEM FACED BY KOREA.

11. CABLE CLEARED WITH AMBASSADOR SNEIDER.
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